

Ohio State Quarters Aboard Shuttle Columbia's Latest Mission

March 1, 2002

Astronauts with Ohio Roots Show State Pride in Space

Washington — Two astronauts with Ohio ties carried Ohio commemorative quarter-dollar coins into space aboard the Space Shuttle Columbia, which was launched today on an 11-day mission to repair the Hubble telescope (Mission STS-109).

The Ohio quarter, the 17th in the U.S. Mint's 50 State Quarters Program, celebrates Ohio as the "Birthplace of Aviation Pioneers." More than 20 astronauts call Ohio home, including John Glenn and Neil Armstrong. Lt. Col. Nancy Currie and Dr. Richard Linnehan, DVM, also have Ohio ties and are members of the crew that was launched into space this morning. Currie was raised in Troy, Ohio, and graduated from Ohio State University. Linnehan also received his degree from Ohio State University.

"I am delighted that NASA has chosen to send four Ohio quarters on Space Shuttle Columbia's mission that began this morning," said U.S. Mint Director Henrietta Holsman Fore. "Colonel Currie and Dr. Linnehan join an illustrious group, from Orville Wright and Eddie Rickenbacker, to John Glenn, Neil Armstrong, and Judith Resnik, as Ohio's latest aviation pioneers."

Placing the four quarters on the shuttle mission was a joint effort involving the U.S. Mint, the Ohio Bicentennial Commission, NASA, and the offices of Governor Bob Taft and Senator George V. Voinovich. When the quarters return to earth, Currie and Linnehan will keep one each, and the other two will be donated to the U.S. Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio, where they will be displayed for the public.

"Ohio's quarter pays tribute to the brave men and women who pushed aviation and space exploration further and further," said Governor Taft. "It is only fitting that two such pioneers are carrying these quarters as they continue in the tradition of other aviation pioneers."

The Ohio quarter will be released into general circulation on March 11th, with an official ceremony on March 18th at the U. S. Air Force Museum in Dayton. The space quarters will be on display for the official ceremony that will include Governor Taft, U.S. Treasurer Rosario Marin, Mint Director Fore and Senator Glenn.

The 50 State Quarters Program is a 10-year initiative commemorating each of the 50 States in the order in which they ratified the Constitution or joined the Union. The Mint will release a new quarter approximately every 10 weeks.

To learn more about the Ohio quarter and the 50 State Quarter Program or to order 50 State Quarter products, please visit the Mint's Web site at www.usmint.gov.

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